SHIPS AND HAVENS

BY

Henry Van Dyke

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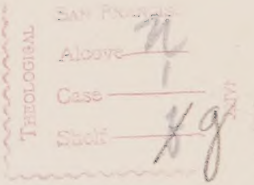
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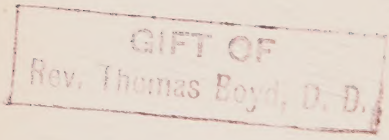
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BY

HENRY VAN DYKE

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE RIVERS," "THE STORY OF THE OTHER WISE MAN," "THE GOSPEL FOR AN AGE OF DOUBT," ETC.

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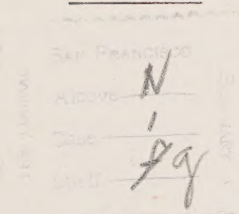

NEW YORK: 46 EAST FOURTEENTH STREET

THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY

BOSTON: 100 PURCHASE STREET

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C. J. Peters & Son, Typographers, Boston.
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CONTENTS.

		PAGE
I.	Pilgrims of the Sea	5
II.	Whither Bound?	10
III.	The Haven of Work	14
	Pleasure	16
	Wealth	19
	Fame	23
	Usefulness	26
IV.	The Haven of Character	28
	The Force of the Ideal	29
	Powerful Day-dreams	30
	The Two Paths	31
	Christian Consummation	32
V.	The Last Port	33
	The Strength of Wishes	35
	The Passion of Immortality	36

SHIPS AND HAVENS.

I. PILGRIMS OF THE SEA.

Of all the things that man has made, none is so full of interest and charm, none possesses so distinct a life and character of its own, as a ship.

"Ships are but boards," says Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice.* But we feel that this is a thoroughly wooden opinion, one of those literal judgments which stick to the facts and miss the truth. Ships have something more in them than the timbers of which they are made. Human thought and human labor and human love, — the designer's clever conception, the builder's patient toil, the explorer's daring venture, the merchant's costly enterprise, the sailor's loyal affection, the traveller's hopes and fears, — all the manifold sympathies of humanity, inform the dumb pilgrims of the sea with a human quality. There is a spirit within their oaken ribs, a significance in their strange histories.

The common language in which we speak of them is an unconscious confession of this feeling. We say of a ship, "She sails well. She minds her helm quickly. The wind is against her, but she makes good headway. We wish her a prosperous voyage." We endow her with personality; and, as if to acknowledge the full measure of our interest, we express it in terms which belong to the more interesting sex.

One reason for this is undoubtedly the fact that the ship appears to us as a traveller to an unseen, and often an unknown, haven. It is the element of mystery, of adventure, of movement towards a secret goal, that fascinates our imagination, and draws our sympathy after it. When this is wanting, the ship loses something of her enchantment.

There is a little cottage where I have spent many summers on the sleepy southern shore of Long Island. From the white porch we could look out upon a shallow, land-locked bay. There we saw, on every sunny day, a score of sailboats, flickering to and fro on the bright circle of water in swallow-flights, with no aim but their own motion in the pleasant breeze. It was a flock of little play-ships, — a pretty sight, but it brought no stir to the thought, no thrill to the emotions.

From the upper windows of the house the outlook surpassed a long line of ragged sand-dunes, and ranged across

"The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea."

There went the real ships, of all shapes and sizes, of all rigs and models; the great steamers, building an airy pillar of cloud by day, a flashing pillar of fire by night; the ragged coasters, with their patched and dingy sails; the slim, swift yachts, hurrying by in gala-dress, as if in haste to arrive at some distant, merry festival of Neptune's court. Sometimes they passed in groups, like flights of plover; sometimes in single file, like a flock of wild swans; sometimes separate and lonely, one appearing and vanishing before the next hove in sight.

When the wind was from the north they hugged the shore. With a glass one could see the wrinkled, weather-beaten face of the man at the wheel, and the short pipe

smoking between his lips. When the wind was southerly and strong they kept far away, creeping slowly along the rim of the horizon. On a fair breeze they dashed along, wing and wing, with easy, level motion. When the wind was contrary they came beating in and out, close-hauled, tossing and laboring over the waves. It was a vision of endless variety and delight. But behind it all, giving life and interest to the scene, was the invisible thought of the desired haven.

Whither is she travelling, that long, four-masted schooner, with all her sails set to catch the fickle northwest breeze? Is it in some languid bay of the West Indies, or in some rocky harbor of Patagonia, amid the rigors of the far southern winter, that she will cast anchor? Where is she bound, that dark little tramp-steamer, trailing voluminous black smoke behind her, and buffeting her way to the eastward in the teeth of the rising gale? Is it in some sunlit port among the bare, purple hills of Spain, or in the cool shadows of some forest-clad Norwegian fiord, that she will find her moorings? Whither away, ye ships? What haven?

How often, and how exquisitely, this question of ships and havens has been expressed by the poets (in prose and verse), who translate our thoughts for us. Longfellow recalls a dream of his childhood in the seaport-town of Portsmouth: —

> "I remember the black wharves and the slips,
> And the sea-tides tossing free;
> And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
> And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
> And the magic of the sea.
> And the voice of that wayward song
> Is singing and saying still:
> 'A boy's will is the wind's will,
> And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'"

George William Curtis wanders down to the Battery, and meditates on *Sea from Shore:* —

"The sails were shaken out, and the ship began to move. It was a fair breeze perhaps, and no steamer was needed to tow her away. She receded down the bay. Friends turned back, — I could not see them, — and waved their hands, and wiped their eyes, and went home to dinner. Farther and farther from the ships at anchor, the lessening vessel became single and solitary upon the water. The sun sank in the west; but I watched her still. Every flash of her sails, as she tacked and turned, thrilled my heart. . . . I did not know the consignees nor the name of the vessel. I had shipped no adventure, nor risked any insurance, nor made any bet, but my eyes clung to her as Ariadne's to the fading sail of Theseus."

And here is a bit of Rudyard Kipling's gusty music from *The Seven Seas:* —

"The Liner she's a lady, an' she never looks nor 'eeds —
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, an' 'e gives 'er all she needs;
But, oh, the little cargo-boats, that sail the wet seas roun',
They're just the same as you and me, a-plyin' up an' down!"

But it is Wordsworth, the most intimate and searching interpreter of delicate, half-formed emotions, who has given the best expression to the feeling that rises within us at sight of a journeying ship: —

"With ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This Ship was naught to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;
This Ship to all the rest I did prefer:
When will she turn, and whither? She will brook

No tarrying: where she comes the winds must stir;
On went she, and due north her journey took.

"Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
What boots the inquiry? — Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may
She finds familiar friends, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters), doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!"

And is not this a parable, beautiful and suggestive, of the way in which we look out, in our thoughtful moods, upon the ocean of human life, and the men and women who are voyaging upon it? In them also the deepest element of interest is that they are in motion. They are all going somewhither. They are not stationary objects in our view. They are not even, in this aspect, parts of the great tide of being in which they float. They are distinct, individual, separate. We single them out one by one. Each one is a voyager, with a port to seek, a course to run, a fortune to experience. The most interesting question that we can ask in regard to them is: Whither bound? What haven?

But this inquiry comes to us now not as an idle or a curious question. For, first of all, we feel that these men and women are not strangers to us. We know why we take a personal interest in one more than in another. We know why we "pursue them with a lover's look." It is as if the "joyous Bark" carried some one that we knew, as if we could see a familiar face above the bul-

warks, and hear a well-beloved voice hailing us across the waves. And then we realize that we also are *en voyage*. We do not stand on the shore as spectators; we, too, are out on the ocean, sailing. All the "reverential fear of the old Sea," the peril, the mystery, the charm, of the voyage, come home to our own experience. The question becomes pressing, urgent, importunate, as we enter into the depth of its meaning. Surely there is nothing that we can ever ask ourselves in which we have a closer, deeper interest, or to which we need to find a clearer, truer answer, than this simple, direct question: *What is our desired haven in the venturesome voyage of life?*

II. WHITHER BOUND?

I want to talk with you about this question in this little book, as a writer may talk with a reader across the unknown intervals of time and space. The book that does not really speak to you is not worth much. And unless you really hear something, and make some kind of an answer to it, you do not truly read.

There is a disadvantage, of course, in the fact that you and I do not know each other and speak face to face. Who you are, into whose hands this book has come, I cannot tell. And to you, I am nothing but a name. Where you may be, while you turn these pages, I cannot guess. Perhaps you are sitting in your own quiet room after a hard day's work; perhaps you are reading aloud in some circle of friends around the open fire; perhaps you are in the quiet woods, or out in the pleasant orchard under your favorite tree; perhaps you are actually on the deck of a ship travelling across the waters. It is strange and wonderful to think of the

many different places into which the words that I am now writing in this lonely, book-lined study may come, and of the many different eyes that may read them.

But wherever you are, and whoever you may be, there is one thing in which you and I are just alike, at this moment, and in all the moments of our existence. We are not at rest; we are on a journey. Our life is not a mere fact; it is a movement, a tendency, a steady, ceaseless progress towards an unseen goal. We are gaining something, or losing something, every day. Even when our position and our character seem to remain precisely the same, they are changing. For the mere advance of time is a change. It is not the same thing to have a bare field in January and in July. The season makes the difference. The limitations that are childlike in the child are childish in the man.

Everything that we do is a step in one direction or another. Even the failure to do something is in itself a deed. It sets us forward or backward. The action of the negative pole of a magnetic needle is just as real as the action of the positive pole. To decline is to accept — the other alternative.

Are you richer to-day than you were yesterday? No? Then you are a little poorer. Are you better to-day than you were yesterday? No? Then you are a little worse. Are you nearer to your port to-day than you were yesterday? Yes, — you must be a little nearer to some port or other; for since your ship was first launched upon the sea of life, you have never been still for a single moment; the sea is too deep, you could not find an anchorage if you would; there can be no pause until you come into port.

But what is it, then, the haven towards which you are

making? What is the goal that you desire and hope to reach? What is the end of life towards which you are drifting or steering?

There are three ways in which we may look at this question, depending upon the point of view from which we regard human existence.

When we think of it as a work, the question is, "What do we desire to accomplish?"

When we think of it as a growth, a development, a personal unfolding, the question is, "What do we desire to become?"

When we think of it as an experience, a destiny, the question is, "What do we desire to become of us?"

Do not imagine for an instant that these questions can be really separated. They are interwoven. They cross each other from end to end of the web of life. The answer to one question determines the answer to the others. We cannot divide our work from ourselves, nor isolate our future from our qualities. A ship might as well try to sail north with her jib, and east with her foresail, and south with her mainsail, as a man to go one way in conduct, and another way in character, and another way in destiny.

What we do belongs to what we are; and what we are is what becomes of us.

And yet, as a matter of fact, there is a difference in these three standpoints from which we may look at our life; and this difference not only makes a little variation in the view that we take of our existence, but also influences unconsciously our manner of thinking and speaking about it. Most of the misunderstandings that arise when we are talking about life come from a failure to remember this. We are looking at the same thing, but

we are looking from opposite corners of the room. We are discussing the same subject, but in different dialects.

Some people — perhaps the majority — are of a practical turn of mind. Life seems to them principally an affair of definite labor directed to certain positive results. They are usually thinking about what they are to do in the world, and what they are to get for it. It is a question of occupation, of accomplishment, of work and wages.

Other people — and I think almost all serious-minded people when they are young, and life still appears fresh and wonderful to them — regard their existence from the standpoint of sentiment, of feeling, of personality. They have their favorite characters in history or fiction, whom they admire and try to imitate. They have their ideals, which they seek and hope to realize. Some vision of triumph over obstacles, and victory over enemies, some model of manhood or womanhood, shines before them. By that standard they test and measure themselves. Towards that end they direct their efforts. The question of life, for them, is a question of attainment, of self-discipline, of self-development.

Other people — and I suppose we may say all people at some time or other in their experience — catch a glimpse of life in still wider and more mysterious relations. They see that it is not really, for any one of us, an independent and self-centred and self-controlled affair. They feel that its issues run out far beyond what we can see in this world. They have a deep sense of a future state of being towards which we are all inevitably moving. This movement cannot be a matter of chance. It must be under law, under responsibility, under guidance. It cannot be a matter of indifference to us. It ought to be the object of our most earnest concern, our most careful

choice, our most determined endeavor. If there is a port beyond the horizon we should know where it lies, and how to win it. And so the question of life, in these profound moods which come to all of us, presents itself as a question of eternal destiny.

Now, if we are to understand each other, if we are to get a view of the subject which shall be anything like a well-rounded view, a complete view, we must look at the question from all three sides. We must ask ourselves: What is our desired haven, first, in achievement; and second, in character; and last, in destiny?

III. THE HAVEN OF WORK.

Surely we ought to know what it is that we really want to do in the world, what practical result we desire to accomplish with our lives. And this is a question which it will be very wise to ask and answer before we determine what particular means we shall use in order to perform our chosen work and to secure the desired result. A man ought to know what he proposes to make before he selects and prepares his tools. A captain should have a clear idea of what port he is to reach before he attempts to lay his course and determine his manner of sailing.

All these minor questions of ways and means must come afterwards. They cannot be settled at the outset. They depend on circumstances. They change with the seasons. There are many paths to the same end. One may be best to-day. Another may be best to-morrow. The wind and the tide make a difference. One way may be best for you, another way for me. The build of the ship must be taken into consideration. A flat-bottomed

craft does best in the shallow water, along shore. A deep keel is for the open sea.

But before we make up our minds how to steer from day to day, we must know where we are going in the long run. Then we can shape our course to fit our purpose. We can learn how to meet emergencies as they arise. We can change our direction to avoid obstacles and dangers. We can take a roundabout way if need be. If we keep the thought of our desired haven clearly before us, all the other points can be more easily and wisely settled; and however devious and difficult the voyage may be, it will be a success when we get there.

I am quite sure that a great deal of the confusion and perplexity of youth, and a great deal of the restlessness and fickleness which older people often criticise so severely and so unjustly, come from the attempt to choose an occupation in life before the greater question of the real object of our life-work has been fairly faced and settled. "What are you going to do when you grow up?" This is the favorite conundrum which the kind aunts and uncles put to the boys when they come home from school; and of late they are beginning to put it to the girls also, since it has been reluctantly admitted that a girl may rightly have something to say about what she would like to do in the world. But how is it possible to make anything more than a blind guess at the answer, unless the boy or the girl has some idea of the practical end which is to be worked for. To choose a trade, a business, a profession, without knowing what kind of a result you want to get out of your labor, is to set sail in the dark. It is to have a course, but no haven; an employment, but no vocation.

There are really only four great practical ends for which men and women can work in this world, — Pleasure, Wealth, Fame, and Usefulness. We owe it to ourselves to consider them carefully, and to make up our minds which of them is to be our chief object in life.

Pleasure is one aim in life, and there are a great many people who are following it, consciously or unconsciously, as the main end of all their efforts. Now, pleasure is a word which has a double meaning. It may mean the satisfaction of all the normal desires of our manhood in their due proportion, and in this sense it is a high and noble end. There is a pleasure in the intelligent exercise of all our faculties, in the friendship of nature, in the perception of truth, in the generosity of love, in the achievements of heroism, in the deeds of beneficence, in the triumphs of self-sacrifice. "It is not to taste sweet things," says Carlyle, "but to do true and noble things, and vindicate himself under God's Heaven as a God-made man, that the poorest son of Adam dimly longs. Show him the way of doing that, the dullest daydrudge kindles into a hero."

But pleasure as we commonly speak of it means something very different from this. It denotes the immediate gratification of our physical senses and appetites and inclinations. There is a free gift of pleasant sensation attached by the Creator to the fulfilment of our natural propensions. The taking of food, for example, not only nourishes the body, but also gratifies the palate; the quenching of thirst is agreeable to the senses as well as necessary to the maintenance of life. No sane and wholesome thinker has ventured to deny that it is lawful and wise to receive this gratuitous gift of pleasure, and rejoice in it, as it comes to us in this

world wherein God has caused to grow "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." But when we make the reception of the agreeable sensation the chief end and motive of our action, when we direct our will and our effort to the attainment of this end, then we enter upon a pleasure-seeking life. We make that which should be our servant to refresh and cheer us, our master to direct and rule and drive us.

The evil nature of this transformation is suggested in the very names which we give to human conduct in which the gratification of the senses has become the controlling purpose. The man who lives for the sake of the enjoyment that he gets out of eating and drinking is a glutton or a drunkard. The man who measures the success and happiness of his life by its physical sensations, whether they be coarse and brutal or delicate and refined, is a voluptuary.

A pleasure-seeking life, in this sense, when we think of it clearly and carefully, is one which has no real end or goal outside of itself. Its aim is unreal and transitory, a passing thrill in nerves that decay, an experience that leads nowhere, and leaves nothing behind it. Robert Burns knew the truth of what he wrote: —

> "But pleasures are like poppies spread,
> You seize the flower, the bloom is shed!"

The man who chooses pleasure as the object of his life has no real haven, but is like a boat that beats up and down and drifts to and fro, merely to feel the motion of the waves and the impulse of the wind. When the voyage of life is done he has reached no port, he has accomplished nothing.

One of the wisest of the ancients, the Stoic philoso-

pher Seneca, wrote a letter to his brother Gallio (the Roman governor before whom St. Paul was tried in Corinth), in which he speaks very frankly about the folly of a voluptuous life.

"Those who have permitted pleasure to lead the van . . . lose virtue altogether, and yet they do not possess pleasure, but *are possessed by it;* and are either tortured by its absence, or choked by its excess, being wretched if deserted by it, and yet more wretched if overwhelmed by it; like those who are caught in the shoals of the Syrtes, and at one time are stranded on dry ground, and at another tossed on the furious billows. . . . As we hunt wild beasts with toil and peril, and even when they are caught find them an anxious possession, for they often tear their keepers to pieces, even so are great pleasures; they turn out to be great evils, and take their owners prisoner."

This is the voice of human prudence and philosophy. The voice of religion is even more clear and piercing. St. Paul says of the pleasure-seekers: "Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things." And in another place, lest we should forget that this is as true of women as it is of men, he says: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." That saying is profoundly true. It goes to the bottom of the subject. A pleasure-seeking life is a living death, because its object perishes even while it is attained, and at the end nothing is left of it but dust and corruption.

Think of the result of existence in the man or woman who has lived chiefly to gratify the physical appetites; think of its real emptiness, its real repulsiveness, when old age comes, and the senses are dulled, and the roses have faded, and the lamps at the banquet are smoking and expiring, and desire fails, and all that remains is

the fierce, insatiable, ugly craving for delights which have fled forevermore; think of the bitter, burning vacancy of such an end, — and you must see that pleasure is not a good haven to seek in the voyage of life.

But what of wealth as a desired haven? When we attempt to consider this subject we have especial need to follow Dr. Samuel Johnson's blunt advice and "clear our minds of cant." There is a great deal of foolish railing against wealth, which takes for granted, now that it is an unsubstantial and illusory good, and now that it is not a good at all, but only an unmixed evil, and the root of all other evils. Many preachers and moralists talk about wealth in this way; but they do not really think about it in this way. They know better. And when young people discover and observe the curious inconsistency between the teacher's words and his thoughts, as illuminated by his conduct, they are likely to experience a sense of disappointment, and a serious revulsion from doctrine which does not seem to be sincere.

Wealth is simply the visible result of human labor, or of the utilization of natural forces and products, in such a form that it can be exchanged. A gallon of water in a mountain lake is not wealth. But the same gallon of water conveyed through an aqueduct and delivered in the heart of a great city represents a certain amount of wealth, because it has a value in relation to the wants of men. A tree growing in an inaccessible forest is not wealth. But a stick of timber which can be delivered in a place where men are building houses is a bit of wealth.

Now, the symbol and measure of wealth is money. It is the common standard by which the value of different commodities is estimated, and the means by which they

are exchanged. It is not a dream nor a delusion. It is something real and solid. It is deserving of our respect under certain conditions and within certain limitations. The man who professes an absolute contempt for money is either a little of a fool or a good deal of a fraud. It represents a product of labor and a form of power. It is worth working for. When a man has won it, there it is — a fact and a force. He can handle it, use it, dispose of it, as he chooses.

But stop a moment; let us think! Is that altogether true? It is partly true, no doubt; for every particle of wealth, or of its symbol, money, is an actual possession of which its owner can dispose. But it is not the whole truth; for the fact is that he *must* dispose of it, because that is the only way in which it becomes available as wealth. A piece of money in an old stocking is no more than a leaf upon a tree. It is only when the coin is taken out and used that it becomes of value. And the nature of the value depends upon the quality of the use.

Moreover, it is not true that a man can dispose of his money *as he chooses*. The purposes for which it can be used are strictly bounded. There are many things that he cannot buy with it; for example, health, long life, wisdom, a cheerful spirit, a clear conscience, peace of mind, a contented heart.

You never see the stock called Happiness quoted on the exchange. How high would it range, think you, — a hundred shares of Happiness Preferred, guaranteed 7%, seller 30?

And there are some things that a man cannot do with his wealth. For instance, he cannot carry it with him when he dies. No system of transfer has been established between the two worlds; and a large balance

here does not mean a balance on the other side of the grave. The property of Dives did not fall in value when he died, and yet he became a pauper in the twinkling of an eye.

There is no question but that those who live to win wealth in this world have a more real and substantial end in view than the mere pleasure-seekers. But the thing that we ought to understand and remember is precisely what that end is. It is the acquisition in our hands of a certain thing whose possession is very brief, and whose value depends entirely upon the use to which it is put. Now, if we make the mere gaining of that thing the desired haven of our life, we certainly spend our strength for naught, and our labor for that which satisfieth not. We narrow and contract our whole existence. We degrade it by making it terminate upon something which is only a sign, a symbol, behind which we see no worthy and enduring reality.

It is for this reason that the "blind vice" of avarice, as Juvenal calls it, has been particularly despised by the wise of all lands and ages. There is no other fault that so quickly makes the heart small and hard.

> "They soon grow old who grope for gold
> In marts where all is bought and sold;
> Who live for self, and on some shelf
> In darkened vaults hoard up their pelf;
> Cankered and crusted o'er with mould,
> For them their youth itself is old."

Nor is there any other service that appears more unprofitable and ridiculous in the end, when the reward for which the money-maker has given his life is stripped away from him with a single touch, and he is left with his trouble for his pains.

"If thou art rich, thou'rt poor;
For like an ass whose back with ingots bows,
Thou bear'st thy heavy burden but a journey,
And death unloads thee."

But perhaps you imagine that no one is in danger of making that mistake, no one is so foolish as to seek wealth merely for its own sake. Do you think so? Then, what shall we say of that large class of men, so prominent and so influential in modern society, whose energies are desperately consecrated to the winning of great fortunes?

So far as their life speaks for them, they have no real ambition beyond that. They are not the leaders in noble causes, the sustainers of beneficent enterprises. They have no refined and elevated tastes to gratify. They are not the promoters of art or science, the adorners of their city with splendid buildings, the supporters of humane and beautiful charities. They have no large plans, no high and generous purposes. They have no public spirit, only an intense private greed. All that we can say of them is that they are rich, and that they evidently want to be richer.

They sit like gigantic fowls brooding upon nests of golden eggs, which never hatch. Their one desire is not to bring anything out of the eggs, but to get more eggs into their nest. It is a form of lunacy — auromania.

But let us not suppose that these notorious examples are the only ones who are touched with this insanity. It is just the same in the man who is embittered by failure, as in the man who is elated by success; just the same in those who make it the chief end of life to raise their hundreds of dollars to thousands, as in those who express their ambition in terms of seven figures. Cov-

etousness is idolatry of wealth. It may be paid to a little idol as well as to a big one. Avarice may be married to Poverty, and then its offspring is named Envy; or it may be married to Riches, and then its children are called Purse-pride and Meanness. Some people sell their lives for heaps of treasure, and some for a scant thirty pieces of silver, and some for nothing better than a promissory note of fortune, without endorsement.

There are multitudes of people in the world to-day who are steering and sailing for Ophir, simply because it is the land of gold. What will they do if they reach their desired haven? They do not know. They do not even ask the question. They will be rich. They will sit down on their gold.

Let us look our desires squarely in the face! To win riches, to have a certain balance in the bank, and a certain rating on the exchange, is a real object, a definite object; but it is a frightfully small object for the devotion of a human life, and a bitterly disappointing reward for the loss of an immortal soul. If wealth is our desired haven, we may be sure that it will not satisfy us when we reach it.

Well, then, what shall we say of fame as the chief end of life? Here, again, we must be careful to discriminate between the thing itself and other things which are often confused with it. Fame is simply what our fellowmen think and say of us. It may be world-wide; it may only reach to a single country or city; it may be confined to a narrow circle of society. Translated in one way, fame is glory; translated in another way, it is merely notoriety. It is a thing which exists, of course; for the thoughts of other people about us are just as actual as our thoughts about ourselves, or as the

character and conduct with which those thoughts are concerned. But the three things do not always correspond.

You remember what Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes says, in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, about the three Johns: —

> "1. The real John; known only to his Maker.
> 2. John's ideal John; never the real one, and often very unlike him.
> 3. Thomas's ideal John; never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either."

Now, the particular object of the life that makes fame its goal is this last John. Its success consists in the report of other people's thoughts and remarks about us. Bare, naked fame, however great it may be, can never bring us anything more than an instantaneous photograph of the way we look to other men.

Consider what it is worth. It may be good or bad, flattering or painfully truthful. People are celebrated sometimes for their vices, sometimes for their follies. Anything out of the ordinary line will attract notice. Notoriety may be purchased by a colossal extravagance or a monumental absurdity. A person has been made notorious simply by showing himself "more kinds of a fool" than any one else in the community.

Many men would be famous for their vanity alone, if it were not so common that it no longer serves as a mark of distinction. We often fancy that we are occupying a large place in the attention of the world, when really we do not even fill a pin-hole.

To be governed in our course of life by a timorous consideration of what the world will think of us, is to

be even lighter and more fickle than a weathercock. It is to be blown about by winds so small and slight that they could not even lift a straw outside of our own versatile imagination. For what is "the world," for whose admiration, or envy, or mere notice, we are willing to give so much? "Mount up," says a wise man, "in a monomania of vanity, the number of those who bestow some passing thought upon you, as high as you dare; and what is this 'world' but a very few miserable items of human existence, which, when they disappear, none will miss, any more than they will miss thyself?"

There is one point in which fame differs very essentially from wealth and pleasure. If it comes to us without being well-earned it cannot possibly be enjoyed. A pleasure may arrive by chance, and still it will be pleasant. A sum of money may be won by a gambler, and still it is real money; he can spend it as he pleases. But fame without a corresponding merit is simply an unmitigated burden. I cannot imagine a more miserable position than that of the poor scribbler who allowed his acquaintances to congratulate him as the writer of George Eliot's early stories. To have the name of great wisdom, and at the same time to be a very foolish person, is to walk through the world in a suit of armor so much too big and too heavy for you that it makes every step a painful effort. To have a fine reputation and a mean character is to live a lie and die a sham. And this is the danger to which every one who seeks directly and primarily for fame is exposed.

One thing is certain in regard to fame: for most of us it will be very brief in itself; for all of us it will be transient in our enjoyment of it.

When death has dropped the curtain we shall hear no

more applause. And though we fondly dream that it will continue after we have left the stage, we do not realize how quickly it will die away in silence, while the audience turns to look at the new actor and the next scene. Our position in society will be filled as soon as it is vacated, and our name remembered only for a moment, — except, please God, by a few who have learned to love us, not because of fame, but because we have helped them and done them some good.

This thought brings us, you see, within clear sight of the fourth practical aim in life, — the one end that is really worth working for, — usefulness. To desire and strive to be of some service to the world, to aim at doing something which shall really increase the happiness and welfare and virtue of mankind, — this is a choice which is possible for all of us; and surely it is a good haven to sail for.

The more we think of it, the more attractive and desirable it becomes. To do some work that is needed, and to do it thoroughly well; to make our toil count for something in adding to the sum total of what is actually profitable for humanity; to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before, or, better still, to make one wholesome idea take root in a mind that was bare and fallow; to make our example count for something on the side of honesty, and cheerfulness, and courage, and good faith, and love, — this is an aim for life which is very wide, as wide as the world, and yet very definite, as clear as light. It is not in the least vague. It is only free; it has the power to embody itself in a thousand forms without changing its character. Those who seek it know what it means, however it may be expressed. It is real and genuine and satisfying. There is nothing

beyond it, because there can be no higher practical result of effort. It is the translation, through many languages, of the true, divine purpose of all the work and labor that is done beneath the sun, into one final, universal word. It is the active consciousness of personal harmony with the will of God who worketh hitherto.

To have this for the chief aim in life ennobles and dignifies all that it touches. Wealth that comes as the reward of usefulness can be accepted with honor; and, consecrated to further usefulness, it becomes royal. Fame that comes from noble service, the gratitude of men, be they few or many, to one who has done them good, is true glory; and the influence that it brings is as near to godlike power as anything that man can attain. But whether these temporal rewards are bestowed upon us or not, the real desire of the soul is satisfied just in being useful. The pleasantest word that a man can hear at the close of the day, whispered in secret to his soul, is "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Christ tells us this: "He that loseth his life shall find it." "Whosever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

Life is divine when duty is a joy.

Do we accept these sailing orders? Is it really the desired haven of all our activity to do some good in the world; to carry our share of the great world's burden which must be borne, to bring our lading of treasure, be it small or great, safely into the port of usefulness? I wonder how many of us have faced the question and settled it. It goes very deep.

IV. THE HAVEN OF CHARACTER.

But deeper still the question goes when we look at it in another light. Our life is made up, not of actions alone, but of thoughts and feelings and habitual affections. These taken all together constitute what we call our present character. In their tendencies and impulses and dominant desires they constitute our future character, towards which we are moving as a ship to her haven.

What is it, then, for you and me, this intimate ideal, this distant self, this hidden form of personality which is our goal?

I am sure that we do not often enough put the problem clearly before us in this shape. We all dream of the future, especially when we are young.

> "A boy's will is the wind's will,
> And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

But our dreams are too much like the modern stage, full of elaborate scenery and machinery, crowded with startling effects and brilliant costumes and magical transformations, but strangely vacant of all real character.

The stuff of which our day-dreams are made is for the most part of very cheap material. We seldom weave into them the threads of our inmost spiritual life. We build castles in Spain, and forecast adventures in Bohemia. But the castle is without a real master. The hero of the adventure is vague and misty. We do not clearly recognize his face, or know what is in his heart.

We picture ourselves as living here or there; we imagine ourselves as members of a certain circle of society, taking our places among the rich, the powerful, the "smart set." We fancy ourselves going through

the various experiences of life, a fortunate marriage, a successful business career, a literary triumph, a political victory. Or perhaps, if our imagination is of a more sombre type, we foreshadow ourselves in circumstances of defeat and disappointment and adversity. But in all these reveries we do not really think deeply of our Selves. We do not stay to ask what manner of men and women we shall be, when we are living here or there, or doing thus or so.

Yet it is an important question. Very much more important, in fact, than the thousand and one trifling interrogatories about the future with which we amuse our idle hours.

And the strange thing is, that, though our ideal of future character is so often hidden from us, overlooked, forgotten, it is always there, and always potently, though unconsciously, shaping our course in life. "Every one," says Cervantes, "is the son of his own works." But his works do not come out of the air, by chance. They are wrought out in a secret, instinctive harmony with a conception of character which we inwardly acknowledge as possible and likely for us.

When we choose between two lines of conduct, between a mean action and a noble one, we choose also between two persons, both bearing our name, the one representing what is best in us, the other embodying what is worst. When we vacillate and alternate between them, we veer, as the man in Robert Louis Stevenson's story veered, between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

We say that we "make up our minds," to do a certain thing or not to do it, to resist a certain temptation or to yield to it. It is true. We "make up our minds"

in a deeper sense than we remember. In every case the ultimate decision is between two future selves, one with whom the virtue is harmonious, another with whom the vice is consistent. To one of these two figures, dimly concealed behind the action, we move forward. What we forget is, that, when the forward step is taken, the shadow will be *myself*. Character is eternal destiny.

There is a profound remark in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* which throws light far down into the abyss of many a lost life. "We are on a perilous margin when we begin to look passively at our future selves, and see our own figures led with dull consent into insipid misdoing and shabby achievement." But there is a brighter side to this same truth of life-philosophy. We are on a path which leads upward, by sure and steady steps, when we begin to look at our future selves with eyes of noble hope and clear purpose, and see our figures climbing, with patient, dauntless effort, towards the heights of true manhood and womanhood. Visions like these are Joseph's dreams. They are stars for guidance. They are sheaves of promise. The very memory of them, if we cherish it, is a power of pure restraint and generous inspiration.

Oh for a new generation of day-dreamers, young men and maidens who shall behold visions, idealists who shall see themselves as the heroes of coming conflicts, the heroines of yet unwritten epics of triumphant compassion and stainless love. From their hearts shall spring the renaissance of faith and hope. The ancient charm of true romance shall flow forth again to glorify the world in the brightness of their ardent eyes, —

> "The light that never was on land or sea,
> The consecration and the poet's dream."

As they go out from the fair gardens of a visionary youth into the wide, confused, turbulent field of life, they will bring with them the marching music of a high resolve. They will strive to fulfil the fine prophecy of their own best desires. They will not ask whether life is worth living, — they will make it so. They will transform the sordid "struggle for existence" into a glorious effort to become that which they have admired and loved.

But such a new generation is possible only through the regenerating power of the truth that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." We must learn to recognize the real realities, and to hold them far above the perishing trappings of existence which men call real.

> The glory of our life below
> Comes not from what we do or what we know,
> But dwells forevermore in what we are.

"He only is advancing in life," says John Ruskin, "whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into Living peace. And the men who have this life in them are the true lords or kings of the earth — they, and they only."

Now I think you can see what is meant by this question of the desired haven in character. What manner of men and women do we truly hope and wish to become?

The number of ideals seems infinite. But, after all, there are only two great types. St. Paul calls them "the carnal," and "the spiritual;" and I know of no better names.

The carnal type of character, weak or strong, clever

or stupid, is always self-ruled, governed by its own appetites and passions, seeking its own ends, and, even when conformed to some outward law or code of honor, obedient only because it finds its own advantage or comfort therein. There is many a man who stands upright only because the pressure of the crowd makes it inconvenient for him to stoop. "The churl in spirit" may speak fair words because of those who hear; but in his heart he says the thing that pleases him, which is vile.

The spiritual type of character is divinely ruled, submissive to a higher law, doing another will than its own, seeking the ends of virtue and holiness and unselfish love. It may have many inward struggles, many defeats, many bitter renunciations and regrets. It may appear far less peaceful, orderly, self-satisfied, than some of those who are secretly following the other ideal. Many a saint in the making seems to be marred by faults and conflicts from which the smug, careful, reputable sensualist is exempt. The difference between the two is not one of position. It is one of direction. The one, however high he stands, is moving down. The other, however low he starts, is moving up.

We all know who it is that stands at the very summit of the spiritual pathway, — Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became a perfect man, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps. We know, too, the steps in which he trod, — obedience, devotion, purity, truthfulness, kindness, resistance of temptation, self-sacrifice. And we know the result of following him, until we come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect manhood, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Which type of character do we honestly desire and

expect to reach? Let us not indulge in any delusions about it. Just as surely as our faces are hardening into a certain expression, ugly or pleasant, and our bodies are moving towards a certain condition of health, sound or diseased, so surely are our souls moving towards a certain type of character. Along which line are we looking and steering? Along the line that leads to an older, grayer, stiffer likeness of our present selves, with all our selfishness and pride and impurity and inconsistency and discontent confirmed and hardened? Or the line that ends in likeness to Christ?

Surely we are voyaging blindly unless we know what haven of character our souls are seeking. Surely we are making a mad and base and fatal choice, unless we direct our course to the highest and the noblest goal. To know Christ is life eternal. To become like Christ is success everlasting.

V. THE LAST PORT.

There is still one more way of putting this question about our desired haven, — a way perhaps more common than the others, and therefore probably more natural, though I cannot believe that it is more important. It is, in fact, simply a carrying on of the first two questions beyond the horizon of mortal sight, a prolongation of the voyage of life upon the ocean of eternity.

Almost all of us have an expectation, however dim and misty, of an existence of some kind after we have crossed the bar of death. Even those who do not believe that this existence will be conscious, those who suppose that death ends all, so far as our thought and feeling are concerned, and that the soul goes out when the heart stops, — even the doubters of immortality fore-

see a certain kind of a haven for their lives in the deep, dreamless, endless sleep of oblivion. There is no one now living who does not owe a clear and definite answer to the question: Where do you wish and expect to go when you die?

Now, I am quite sure that we have no right to try to separate this question of our haven after death from the questions in regard to our present aspirations and efforts in conduct and character. For every one who considers it soberly must see that our future destiny cannot possibly be anything else than the reward and consequence of our present life. Whether it be a state of spiritual blessedness, or an experience of spiritual woe, or simply a blank extinction, it will come as the result of the deeds done in the body. It will be the fitting and inevitable arrival at a goal towards which we have been moving in all our actions, and for which we have been preparing ourselves by all the secret affections and hopes and beliefs which we are daily working into our characters.

But there is a reason, after all, and a very profound reason, why we should sometimes put this question of our desired haven after death in a distinct form, and why we should try to give a true and honest answer to it, with an outlook that goes beyond the grave.

It is because the answer will certainly determine our conduct now, and there is every reason to believe that it will affect the result hereafter.

Men say that the future life is only a possibility, or at best a probability, and that it is foolish to waste our present existence in the consideration of problems to which the only answer must be a "perhaps," or "I hope so," or "I believe so." But is it not one of the very conditions of our advance, even in this world, that we

should be forever going forward along lines which lie altogether in the region of the probable, and for which we have no better security than our own expectation and wish that they shall lead us to the truth, anticipated, but as yet unproved and really unknown?

"So far as man stands for anything," writes Professor William James, the psychologist, in his latest book, *The Will to Believe*, "and is productive or originative at all, his entire vital function may be said to have to deal with *maybes*. Not a victory is gained, not a deed of faithfulness or courage is done, except upon a maybe; not a service, not a sally of generosity, not a scientific exploration or experiment or text-book, that may not be a mistake. It is only by risking our persons from one hour to another that we live at all. And often enough our faith beforehand in an uncertified result *is the only thing that makes the result come true.*"

Surely this is certain enough in regard to the difference between this present life as a dull and dismal struggle for the meat and drink that are necessary for an animal existence, and as a noble and beautiful conflict for moral and spiritual ends. *It is the faith that makes the result come true.* As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he, and so is his world. For those whose thoughts are earthly and sensual, this is a beast's world. For those whose thoughts are high and noble and heroic, it is a hero's world. The strength of wishes transforms the very stuff of our existence, and moulds it to the form of our heart's inmost desire and hope.

Why should it not be true in the world to come? Why should not the eternal result, as well as the present course, of our voyaging depend upon our own choice of a haven beyond the grave? Christ says that it does.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

If the immortal life is a reality, is it not reasonable to think that the first condition of our attaining it is that we should personally wish for it, and strive to enter into it? And must not our neglect or refusal to do this be the one thing that will inevitably shut us out from it, and make our eternity an outer darkness?

Mark you, I do not say that it is reasonable to suppose that we must be absolutely certain of the reality of heaven in order to arrive thither. We may have many doubts and misgivings. But deep down in our hearts there must be the wish to prove the truth of this great hope of an endless life with God, and the definite resolve to make this happy haven the end of all our voyaging.

This is what the apostle means by "the power of an endless life." The passion of immortality is the thing that immortalizes our being. To be in love with heaven is the surest way to be fitted for it. Desire is the magnetic force of character. Character is the compass of life. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself."

Let me, then, put this question to you very simply and earnestly and personally.

What is your desired haven beyond the grave? It is for you to choose. There are no secret books of fate in which your course is traced, and your destiny irrevocably appointed. There is only the Lamb's book of life, in which new names are being written every day, as new hearts turn from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. No ship that sails the sea is as free to make for her port as you are to seek the haven that your inmost soul desires. And

if your choice is right, and if your desire is real, so that you will steer and strive with God's help to reach the goal, you shall never be wrecked or lost.

For of every soul that seeks to arrive at usefulness, which is the service of Christ, and at holiness, which is the likeness of Christ, and at heaven, which is the eternal presence of Christ, it is written: —

So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

Like unto ships far off at sea,
Outward or homeward bound, are we.
Before, behind, and all around,
Floats and swings the horizon's bound,
Seems at its distant rim to rise
And climb the crystal wall of the skies,
And then again to turn and sink
As if we could slide from its outer brink.
Ah! it is not the sea,
It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,
But ourselves
That rock and rise
With endless and uneasy motion,
Now touching the very skies,
Now sinking into the depths of ocean.
Ah! if our souls but poise and swing
Like the compass in its brazen ring,
Ever level and ever true
To the toil and the task we have to do,
We shall sail securely, and safely reach
The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach
The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,
Will be those of joy and not of fear.

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